

# *The Volunteer's Heartbeat*

*"Service for Service"*

*Volume 2, Issue 3*

*March, April 2010*

## HINES WELCOMES NEW DIRECTOR



An enthusiastic and experienced new leader, Mrs. Sharon M. Helman, took over as the new Hines Director, effective January 31, 2010. Mrs. Helman has more than 19 years of VA experience, including key leadership positions at eight VA facilities in the past 10 years. She most recently served as the Director of the Spokane VA Medical Center.

"My career with the Department of Veterans Affairs reflects working at all levels of the organization, different positions, and numerous medical centers throughout the country," said Mrs. Helman. "It has been a personal and professional journey that reflects my passion to serve those who have given us our freedom. The sacrifice that they and their families have endured during their service to protect that freedom is priceless."

During her tenure at the Spokane VAMC, Mrs. Helman consistently developed new methods to bring Veterans first-class service in rural areas. She pioneered new telehealth and telepsychiatry expansions to increase patient access and partnered with other Government and private organizations in the area to provide comprehensive health care services to Veterans. She looks forward to bringing her unique experiences and background to Hines.

"The ingrained work ethic, passion, and drive of Hines VA Hospital employees are prevalent in the history of everything they have done (article continued on page 4)



### Edward Hines Jr. VA Hospital

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### *Mission of Voluntary Service:*

*To provide a structured  
Volunteer Program under  
the management of VA  
compensated employees in  
cooperation with  
community resources to  
serve America's veterans  
and their families with  
dignity and compassion.*

### Inside this issue:

<i>Valentines for Veterans Concert</i>	2-3
<i>Announcements</i>	6
<i>Fisher House Update</i>	7
<i>Someone You Should Know</i>	9
<i>Voluntary Service Calendar</i>	10

## Valentines for Veterans Concert is a Huge Success



On Saturday evening, February 6, 2010, more than 2000 veterans and their guests attended the Valentines for Veterans Concert sponsored by Hines VA Hospital, Jesse Brown VAMC, and Help Hospitalized Veterans. The concert was held at the beautiful and historic Auditorium Theatre in downtown Chicago.

The concert featured the Chi-Lites, a Chicago-based smooth soul vocal group. During the 1970s, they racked up 11 Top 10 U.S. R&B singles, ranging from the romantic ballads "Have You Seen Her" and "Oh Girl" to protest songs like "(For God's Sake) Give More Power to the People" and "There Will Never Be Any Peace (Until God Is Seated at the Conference Table)".

The concert event honored the men and women who have faithfully served our country and sacrificed to preserve our individual and collective freedoms. Special guests included Gold Star Families from the Chicago area.

Among the who preceded the concert were Tammy Duckworth, Assistant Secretary for Public and Intergovernmental Affairs, Department of Veterans Affairs.

Other speakers included Dan Grant, Director of the Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs; Sharon M. Helman, Director of the Edward Hines Jr. VA Hospital; Jim Jones, Director of Jesse Brown VAMC; and Marty Naugher, Voluntary Service in Washington, DC.

More than 60 volunteers from the two VA facilities assisted in welcoming the veterans and making the evening a tremendous success.

The first V4V Concert was held in Prescott, AZ, in an effort to provide support to returning combat veterans who were hospitalized during the Valentine's Day holiday. In 2010, 11 concerts were held throughout the country.

Help Hospitalized Veterans (HHV) provided the funding for the entertainers and the training and support for planners of the event. The goal of HHV is to hold a concert in every state by 2012.

Hines thanks all those who attended the concert and played a part in making this an evening to remember!



Left: Hines volunteers in green shirts receive orientation for the evening.

Below: Informational tables helped guests learn about VA programs.



Left: Volunteers welcome the guests with gifts of red bags

Bottom left: The Chi-Lites

Below: Kim from Voluntary Service dances with Casper, the Emcee for the evening.





(New Director—continued from page 1)

for Veterans health care over the years,” she said. “Hines has been 'first' in many things—from obtaining the first university affiliation to opening the first Blind Rehabilitation Center. It will be an honor being a part of that rich tradition and working with leadership to continue to serve our nation's heroes.”

Mrs. Helman is no stranger to VISN 12 or the Midwest. “After growing up in Iowa, starting my VA career at the Iowa City VA Medical Center, and having worked at the Tomah VA, this feels like coming home for me and my family,” she said. “I am looking forward to serving at the premiere Hines VA Hospital, alongside the nation's most hard working, talented, creative, and passionate staff and volunteers.”

### Explore My Healthe Vet

VA offers Veterans, active duty service members, their dependents and caregivers the gift of My HealtheVet, [www.myhealth.va.gov](http://www.myhealth.va.gov). This online Personal Health Record is available anywhere the Internet is available. My HealtheVet helps Veterans partner with health care teams and provides them opportunities and tools to make informed decisions.

If you are already a user and a VA patient, you can get an upgraded account that will let you refill VA prescriptions by name, not just prescription number. Go online to learn how to upgrade your account.

### Share the Newsletter far and wide...

Since the newsletter can now be found on the Hines website, we encourage you to send it to family and friends. Let them know who we are and what we are doing.

To read the newsletter, all you have to do is to go <http://www.hines.va.gov> and click on the “Volunteer or Donate” link.

If you would like your name removed from the hard-copy mailing list, e-mail Barb at [barbara.hunt@va.gov](mailto:barbara.hunt@va.gov).

## ***Help Spread the News***

Hines is always looking for new ways to communicate with our Veterans. Last year the facility purchased six flat screen monitors that are displayed in high traffic areas around the hospital. These monitors are used to inform patients and visitors about upcoming events, promote health initiatives like flu shots, and generally keep them up to date on hospital happenings. Patient and visitor response to the new system has been overwhelmingly positive.

Hines would like to expand this initiative and put an additional 10 monitors up around the hospital; all in high traffic patient areas, including the outpatient pharmacy waiting area, the eye clinic waiting area, and the general medicine and surgical subspecialty clinic waiting areas. To do this....we need your help.

Each television monitor and corresponding communication system costs approximately \$3,800. We are looking for donations to make this project a reality. By donating to this worthwhile effort, you will be helping us better communicate with our veterans on issues that directly affect them. Each donor will be entitled to have a donor plate placed on the monitor to let others know of your generous support. Thank you for your consideration. For information, contact the Voluntary Service office at 708-202-2523.

## **Wear Your ID and Vest**

All Hines VA employees and volunteers are required to wear their employee identification badges at all times when on the Hospital grounds. Your badge must be clearly visible for quick and easy recognition. Your vest identifies you as a trained volunteer and helps people know they can ask you for help.

## **Voluntary Service Calendar**

April 22—Volunteer Recognition Ceremony and Earth Day

May 19—Quarterly VAVS meeting

May 31—Memorial Day holiday

June 14—Flag Day

July 4—4th of July holiday

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The official ribbon cutting ceremony for our new Fisher House is scheduled for Friday, May 28<sup>th</sup> and will involve hundreds of community supporters as well as dignitaries from Washington DC and beyond. Patient clinics for that day have already been suspended due to parking and congestion concerns.

The May VAVS quarterly meeting will be held on Wednesday, May 19, at 9 am. If you are a representative or deputy for your service organization, we hope you will be in attendance. Snacks will be provided.

A parking study is currently underway to determine the need for additional parking and the location of future parking lots. At this time Hines has a shortage of parking for veterans, volunteers, employees and visitors. Work on any new parking lots will begin as soon as the weather improves. Veterans are encouraged to use free valet parking if they come at a time when parking spaces are not available.

Module 4 (Orthotics, Outpatient Surgery and Podiatry) has moved to the 5th floor of Building 200. This newly renovated space has a friendlier environment and gives more space for patient care. Stop by the 5th floor to look around.

Hines currently has over 160 construction projects in progress. Some of these are not obvious since they may be in the tunnels beneath the Hospital or in parts of the Hospital where access is not granted. However, some of the projects are more visible. This summer you will see piles of dirt around campus as new electric lines are placed underground. Bear with us as we work for the future.

## ***Fisher House Activities***

Keys to the Fisher House at Edward Hines Jr. VA Hospital have been turned over to Hines. Construction has been completed, and the house is completely furnished. is currently in the process of organizing supplies and donations.

Fisher House Manager Holly Wright is currently in the process of purchasing last minute items for the house and recruiting volunteers who will work there. If you are interested in learning more about volunteer opportunities, contact Holly at 708-202-2745.

Volunteer applications can be found on the Hines website [www.hines.va.gov](http://www.hines.va.gov)—just follow the “Volunteer or Donate” link on the left navigator bar. You can also call Voluntary Service at 708-202-2523 to have an application mailed to you.

Another way to help is by shopping in the retail store. Each year the VCS Retail Store has a sale in which proceeds go to the Fisher House Foundation to build new VA Fisher Houses. This year the sale will be **March 4-14th, 2010**. The Fisher House Foundation builds and donates Fisher Houses to DoD and VA for lodging families visiting hospitalized service members and Veterans.

### **Service Organizations, Schools and Individuals Make Generous Donations...**

The early January snow did not keep employees of Chicagoland Carstar from delivering comfort items and books to Voluntary Service. Sandra and Julie are shown standing beside the snowdrifts on their way into the building.



Among the generous donations received since the last newsletter was a check for \$6111 from the Bowlers to Veterans Link.

The donation will support recreation and therapeutic programs for Veterans. Operation Support Our Troops—Illinois and The Naperville Exchange Club and Park District combined to make a donation of \$100,000 to support the Fisher House.

Thanks to all of those who have made cash or in-kind donations. Your kindness directly assists the Hospital in providing additional programs for our Veterans.

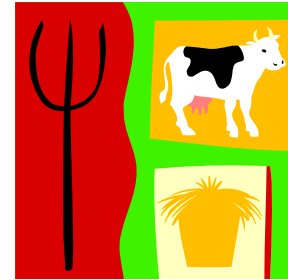
## Come to the Fair

The 2010 Hines Volunteer Recognition Ceremony will be held April 22, 2010. The location will be determined in the next couple of weeks and will be noted in the invitation you should be receiving by the end of March. Doors will open at 10 a.m. The awards ceremony will start at 11, and lunch will follow.

The theme for the recognition is "A County Fair." All volunteers and staff members are encouraged to come in a costume. There will be contests for the costumes most fitting a county fair for both volunteers and staff members.

Other activities will include Midway games (such as Bozo buckets, penny pitching, guess the weight and age). We are trying to locate a square dance caller so that we can have an old fashioned barn dance following lunch.

Plan now to attend the ceremony. This is the our way of saying thank you for the many hours of service you donate to our Veterans every year.



### Caitlin Moran Wins National Youth Leadership Forum Scholarship

Caitlin Moran, a high school senior whose mother works at Hines, was selected for the 2010 NYLF scholarship sponsored by the Voluntary Service Executive Committee. Caitlin will spend 10 days this summer in a program at University of Illinois-Chicago learning about the medical field. She will have workshops, visit hospitals, and even have time for fun in Chicago. Congratulations to Caitlin!



Voluntary Service is currently in need of women's underwear (bras and panties) sizes M-XXL. We also need CTA pre-paid bus passes to help our veterans get to their medical appointments. Call us at 708-202-2523 if you have questions.



## *Someone You Should Know...*

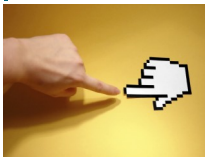
Hines VA Hospital has a new swing set thanks to almost-Eagle Scout Charlie Thompson. Charlie is 16 years old and resides in River Forest. He is a high school sophomore and member of Troop 66 at Grace Lutheran Church. He has been a scout since he was seven.

Only one percent of kids who enter Cub Scouts go on to become Eagle Scouts. The goal is to learn leadership, but projects usually have a civic dimension—identifying a need and filling it. Charlie's Eagle counselor, Diane Carioscio, was the first to suggest a project at Hines. She suggested a swing set in the Inter-generational Park where patients interact with their children and grandchildren.

Charlie started with an estimate—\$600—which quickly ballooned to \$2500. As a result he had to get involved with fundraising. He raised funds at church; by visiting various service organizations such as the VFW, the Italian American War Veterans, and the Korean War Veterans; and through a website that his mom helped him design. Hines Voluntary Service donated the mulch that would be needed for the project.

Charlie then needed to order the supplies and recruit other scouts to help with the project. With the assistance of 20 members from his troop, several troop leaders and adult volunteers (to oversee the digging of post holes, etc.) the work was completed on October 3, 2009. The project took over a year to complete, but according to Charlie "it was one of the best things I've ever done."

His advice to upcoming scouts: "Take it seriously and go for it. There are a lot of rewards and it will change your life." Thank you, Charlie, for your wonderful gift!



### Let Your Fingers Do the Walking...

Did you know that the volunteer sign in computers have touch screens? You still need to use the keyboard to enter your code.

But from that point on, let your finger do the work. If you have had difficulty using the mouse, this is a fast and easy way to log your hours and get your meal ticket. Don't hesitate to ask any of us in the office to show you how it works.

## ► March 2010

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30 Passover begins	31			

## ► April 2010

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4 Easter	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22 Volunteer Recognition Ceremony	23	24 Welcome Home at UIC
25	26	27	28	29	30	